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ABSTRACT

Portfolios for preservice teachers have become commonplace. However, their use in administrator training programs has met with resistance because of problems inherent in portfolio design and the fact that they are difficult to assess. A portfolio design is suggested in this paper that consists of a leadership framework and a belief matrix. The leadership framework is composed of eight paragraphs designed to communicate the intended message succinctly: (1) philosophy of education; (2) philosophy of leadership; (3) vision for teaching and learning; (4) vision for teachers; (5) vision for the organization; (6) vision for school improvement; (7) vision for professional growth; and (8) vision for developing professional learning communities. The belief matrix contributes to the students' ability to reflect upon their dispositions and to express them succinctly. The matrix can be tailored to the strengths and skills of the individual candidate or tailored to a specific job description. The standards section is organized around performance activities or experiences that demonstrate International Educational Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) and/or Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC) standards. The portfolio concept lends itself well to the challenges of assessing students in principal preparation programs in ways that are authentic and job-embedded. (RT)

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Portfolios for Professional Growth and Documenting ISLLC Standards

Portfolios for pre-service teachers have become commonplace. However, the use of portfolios in administrator training programs has met some resistance. This reluctance to rely on portfolios as an assessment tool is understandable considering the problems inherent in portfolio design and the fact that portfolios are notoriously difficult to assess. However, careful consideration of the purposes can result in portfolios in a usable format. This paper presents a model of a portfolio designed to promote professional growth and to document standards.

Professional Growth

Students in administrator training programs often value clarity in their coursework and want the facts and procedures of educational leadership presented in unequivocal terms. However, clear facts and procedures do not promote professional growth. Only through the challenging of beliefs will professional growth occur (Hitchcock, 1991). This challenging of beliefs can take the form of reflective practice. The idea of reflective practice for administrators is relatively new. However, one of the characteristics of successful principals is the ability for self-reflection (Brown & Irby, 1997, Sergiovanni, 2000). Reflection takes the aspiring administrator away from a basic level of understanding of school leadership to a level of critical examination, self-assessment, and new visions (Brown & Irby, 1997). Reflective principals "… do not accept solutions and mechanically apply them. They do not assume that the norm is the one best way to practice and they are suspicious of easy answers to complex questions" (Sergiovanni, 2000, p. 46). The reflective practice section of this portfolio design consists of a *leadership framework* and a *belief matrix*.

Leadership framework

The leadership framework (Brown & Irby, 1997, Martin-Kneip, 1999) is composed of eight paragraphs: 1) philosophy of education, 2) philosophy of leadership, 3) vision for teaching and learning, 4) vision for teachers 5) vision for the organization, 6) vision for school improvement, 7) vision for professional growth, and 8) vision for developing professional learning communities. These sections of the portfolio should be designed to succinctly communicate the intended message. It is this succinctness that lends itself most to reflective practice and professional growth.

The *philosophy of education* concerns the candidate's basic beliefs and values about education (Martin-Kniep, 1999). Clear philosophical beliefs, sound decision-making, and ethical considerations are assuming a growing importance for educational leaders (Czaja & Lowe, 2000). However, when students are mostly concerned with simple survival in the principalship, they often find it difficult to consider that administrative practices often require reason and moral justification (Ericson, 1997). Therefore, each institution that prepares educational leaders has a responsibility to provide growth in this area (Czaja & Lowe, 2000).

The *philosophy of leadership* is derived primarily from the philosophy of education. This may be the most important paragraph in the leadership framework. This paragraph addresses the beliefs and values about the role of leaders in the educational community and about the relationship between the leaders and the different stakeholders (Martin-Kniep, 1999).

McCowen, Arnold, Miles & Haradin (2000) found that one of the essential determiners of success for beginning principals was the ability to effectively sustain a

school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning. The *vision for teaching and learning* paragraph describes this relationship between teachers and students and the candidate's beliefs about learning (Martin-Kniep, 1999).

The *vision for teachers* includes beliefs about teachers, characteristics of effective teachers, and the evaluation of successful teaching (Martin-Kniep, 1999). This paragraph addresses the selection and supervision of staff and describes the candidate's views on the planning of staff development to support teaching and learning.

The *vision for school improvement* addresses beliefs about planning for school improvement, approaches to teaching, and the types and uses of student assessment (Martin-Kniep, 1999). This section of the leadership framework also addresses the candidate's vision for the integration of technology with teaching and learning.

Effective organizational skills are a basic requirement for success. In fact, Missouri superintendents perceive effective school management as a primary factor in the success of beginning principals (McCowen et. al., 2000). In addition, Indiana superintendents perceive weakness in organizational management as a primary reason for beginning principal failure (Coutts, J. 1997). The *vision for the organization* section addresses the candidate's management style and discipline philosophy.

The *vision for professional growth* articulates the candidate's personal skills and a personal growth plan to improve leadership skills. Personal technology skills are also included in this section.

The *vision for developing professional learning communities* addresses the candidate's communication, community relations, and team building skills (Martin-Kniep, 1997). This paragraph includes beliefs and strategies regarding collaborative

leadership and the inclusion of the community in the life and culture of the school. This paragraph addresses leadership for change, strategic planning, coalition building, and public relations skills and strategies.

Belief matrix

The belief matrix further contributes to reflective practice by providing a framework for students to clarify dispositions. The belief matrix concept was initiated for pre-service teachers at the University of Wyoming. Pre-service teachers were asked to identify their beliefs about teaching and learning in a matrix as they prepared to enter the job market. School executives from several western states reported that the matrix set the interviewee apart from the norm and provided a telling description of the candidate. Teacher candidates also reported that the matrix was an invaluable interview tool (Berube, Morrison, & Von Krosigk, 1998). The authors found a similar tool to be very helpful for aspiring administrators.

The belief matrix for aspiring principals is based on the leadership framework. However, the matrix can be tailored to the strengths and skills of the individual candidate or tailored to a specific job description. The suggested belief matrix is divided into nine categories: 1) philosophy and guiding principles, 2) organizational manager, 3) supervision and selection of staff, 4) teaching, learning and technology, 5) leadership, 6) communication and relationships, 7) professional growth 8) school improvement, and 9) student assessment and achievement (Table 1).

-Insert Table One-

Documenting Standards

National and state calls for reform have changed the way educational administration preparation programs have been viewed. Current standards and guidelines now reflect a new direction for educational leadership programs focusing on awareness, understanding, and capability through an integrated approach. The concept of an integrated standards-based approach involves more than the offering of loosely connected and/or isolated courses of study. It requires a substantial interweaving of standards governing knowledge, dispositions and skills into a meaningful whole.

Consequently, the standards section of the portfolio is organized around performance activities or experiences that demonstrate International Educational Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) and/or Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC) standards. The chosen artifacts can demonstrate a single standard or a combination of standards, including state standards or Standards for School Administrators (TSSA). For example, ELCC Standard 1.0 could be demonstrated by expanding the leadership framework into a professional philosophy or vision statement reflecting personal dispositions, philosophy, and vision of educational leadership. ELCC Standards 1.0 and 3.0 could be demonstrated by a strategic plan that includes financial, personnel, and material resources for school improvement (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2002).

Summary

The challenge of redesigning educational leadership programs has created considerable controversy. The challenge has also created opportunity for creative dialogue and new visions of the role of the school principal. Educational leadership programs are challenged to promote dispositions in candidates that positively affect

student learning, motivation and development. These dispositions are guided by well-grounded and ethical beliefs and attitudes that determine interpersonal interactions, decision-making, and administrator behavior. Concomitantly, principal preparation programs are required to assess students in ways that are authentic and job embedded. The portfolio concept lends itself extremely well to these challenges.

Table One: Belief Matrix

Philosophy and Guiding Principles	**Organizational Management**	**Selection/supervision**
Teaching, Learning & Technology	**Leadership**	**Communication & Relationships**
Professional Growth	**School Improvement**	**Student Achievement & Assessment**

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